

March 2013



Holton Health & Wellness Center

Dear Spring Arbor University Student and Parent,

Recent national publicity has raised concern about bacterial meningitis on college campuses. As a parent you should know about this potentially life-threatening disease. Although there have been no cases of this illness on our campus, we are taking a proactive step towards protecting our students by offering the meningitis vaccine at Spring Arbor University.

Meningitis is a serious disease that affects the brain and spinal cord. Because meningitis is a grave illness and can rapidly progress to death, it requires early diagnosis and treatment. This is often difficult because the symptoms closely resemble those of the flu and the highest incidence of meningitis occurs during late winter and early spring (flu season). When not fatal, bacterial meningitis can lead to permanent disabilities such as hearing loss, brain damage or loss of limbs.

Recent studies of college outbreaks suggest that freshman living in residence halls have a slightly higher risk of contracting this disease because they live and work in close proximity to each other. Because of these findings the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as well as the American College Health Association, recommend that students in this group be informed of their risk of contracting the disease and the potential benefits of vaccination. They further recommend that the vaccine should be provided or made easily available to those freshmen that wish to reduce their risk of bacterial meningitis.

I encourage you to have your son or daughter participate in this important health initiative. The cost for each student will be \$120, which covers our cost. The Holton Health & Wellness Center can only accept cash or check; we are unable to bill your insurance company directly. However, we can provide you with a form that can be submitted to your provider for reimbursement if your policy covers this vaccine. For more information about bacterial meningitis and the vaccine, please refer to the Informed Consent to Administer Meningitis Vaccination. Please return the enclosed Informed Consent document regardless of your decision to vaccinate your student. The vaccine will be administered Move-In Day or within the first week of classes.

Sincerely,

Mary Rick, CPNP, CFNP
Executive Director, Holton Health & Wellness Center
Spring Arbor University